

ACCELERATION — SEXUALITY
CERTAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEXUAL LIFE AND
PHYSICAL MATURITY OF 14—18 YEARS OLD SECONDARY
SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

The accelerated social development of the 20th century brings the time of the sexual maturation earlier and sexual reaction-readiness of the young as well. Although acceleration has strongly slowed down nowadays, the sexual activity of the young is beginning much earlier and is also more intensive. (They begin their sexual life at the age of 15—16 on an average). The former facts are supported by a sexological survey and growth study carried out among school children from the county Csongrád (Southern Hungary).

At the end of the paper a summary is given of the facts thought by the author to result (with the exception of acceleration) in the earlier and more intensive sexual life of the young, compared to the previous generation.

Key words: acceleration, petting, sexual intercourse, orgasm.

Introduction

Ontogenesis is no other than the enactment in determined succession of the developmental information, its manifestation on the basis of the genetic program of the impregnated ovule. The genotype in interrelation with the environment jointly determine the prevailing reality from the prospective potential. The investigational results prove that both in human and domestic animal relations the embryonal and postembryonal effects are important in the enactment of the genetic information. Since this recognition made at the end of the last century, the effect of environment on development is also considerably tried to be ensured consciously. (For example deliberate family planning, pregnant care, medical care and improvement of social conditions, formation of correct dietary habits, etc). All these have jointly resulted in the accelerated physical development of the 20th century, being mentioned as secular acceleration. This means that "today more abilities might prevail and earlier, than at any time so far" (NAGY, 1969).

The young are higher, have greater weight and become mature sexually earlier than their ancestors of the 19th century. BRYAN and GREENBERG (1952) have proved that children reaching maturity earlier are higher and stronger than their mates.

The scientists studying the facts calling forth acceleration are mainly on the same opinion in respect to the multifactoral character as well as the causes revealed so far. The accelerative hypotheses considered by WALTER (1978) are as follows:

1. Heliogenic-effect hypothesis of KOCH (1935)
2. Urbanization effect (DE RUDDER, 1943, 1960)

3. Selection hypothesis (BENNHOLDT—THOMSEN, 1942), according to which the vegetative more unstable rural people are stimulatingly affected by the urban stimulatory reactions.
4. Disintegration of genetic isolates (SCHAEUBLE, 1954; NOLD, 1963)
5. Change in dietary habits (LENZ, 1944) both from quantitative and qualitative viewpoints (protein, vitamin, mineral salts).

From his studies carried out on couples of various degrees of relationship, THOMA (1960) came to the conclusion that the determinative role of the genetic effect in sexual maturity falls between 72.2 and 88.2%.

In his comprehensive essay, GRIMM (1966) gives an analysis of the accelerative factors determined by SCHLÜSSEL (1965). In comparison to the classification of WALTER, they mention two new factors; "Decrease in illness in early childhood" and — although not emphatically — "The influencing role of sexual sphere", referring to several authors and their own studies.

The acceleration of somatic development ensures favourable conditions for the acceleration of psychical puberty, too, which to a certain extent also has stimulating reaction on the somatic acceleration. All this can be stated despite the fact that in human relations there is uneven development, i.e. negative allometry between the nervous system and the rest of the body (NAGY, 1969), this making the growth acceleration of the young a social problem at the same time. It is evident that those young people who menstruate and experience pollution earlier, start to think of sexual life and are even familiar with these questions earlier (RÖSLER, 1963), and thus also show interest sooner in the practical realization of sexual intercourse.

Materials and methods

Since the rate of acceleration is presumably also influenced by the climatic factors besides the social and biological effects, only the data of surveys carried out at identical areas have been used. Due to the fact that there are no data at disposal regarding the sexual maturity of boys from the environs of our habitation (such data are few even in international literature because of the difficulties of the objective measurements), the process in only demonstrated in the case of girls.

During the course of the last two decades FARKAS et al. performed two large-scale growth studies in Szeged and the county of Csongrád. They studied 1,136 girls from Szeged in the 1966—67 school-year (FARKAS, 1969) and 4,963 in the 1981—82 school-year (FARKAS et al., 1985), using the same methods. From the study results we put forth only those data which are the most important in respect to sexual maturity, thus the menarche medians, as well as the age values of the 50% developmental stage of the breast (mamma) and pubic hair (pubes).

The sexological survey carried out by the author in 1982 in the county of Csongrád among secondary school students (aged 14—18) serves as the demonstration of the sexual activity of the young people. During the course of this survey information was obtained from 7,409 students by anonymous questionnaire method, from which the data of 7116 students could be evaluated. (The rest of the forms were not filled out (71) or were of no use due to misleading data (222)). The coding of the questionnaires was carried out by two persons all through, and besides this the majority of unreliable data could be screened with the help of so-called control questions. The data were adapted to R-40 type computer and processed with the OSIRIS program-package (RATTENBURY and VAN ECK, 1973).

A few characteristics of the sample — comprising 42.63% of the county's students — are the followings:

- distribution of students according to sex — boys 48.6%, girls 51.4%;
- distribution according to school types — secondary school students 59.4% students of vocational training 40.6%;
- students living in whole families — 79.2%;
- distribution of parents' occupation: 65.7% of fathers were manual workers;

40.1% of mothers were manual workers;
17.5% of fathers had secondary school education;
this being 22.2% in the case of mothers;
8.5% of fathers, and 5.1% of mothers had higher education.

Most of the social data suitable for comparison correspond to the county and even the national data with deviation of only few per cent. Therefore, our sampling could be regarded as proportional, despite the fact that participation in the survey was voluntary.

Results and discussion

The first menstruation (menarche) is the most exact sign of sexual maturity, puberty in the case of girls. While in Hungary it occurred between 15—19 years of age during the 19th century, on the basis of the data by FARKAS (1969) the menarche median value came to 12.73 years in 1966—1967 in Southern Hungary. At the same time the 50% level of adulthood maturity was 12.4 years regarding breast development (mamma) and 13.85 years in respect to pubic hair (pubes).

Former author received the following results from the same area in 1981—1982: menarche 12.68 years (FARKAS et al., 1985), mamma 12.95 years; pubes 12.6 years (FARKAS, data not published yet).

The data (with the exception of breast development) prove that although in slower rate, the start of sexual maturity has shifted to an earlier period even in the past one and a half decades. The slackening (moreover, regarding certain marks the stagnation) of acceleration could be explained by the fact that the maximal realization of the developmental program stabilized in the genes is hindered by less and less factors.

The experiences of every-day life and the results of our survey also demonstrate that not only the starting of sexual maturity, but even the beginning of sexual activity shift to earlier and earlier period, and at the same time the intensity increased as well. The enhancing eroticism experienced in the spheres of mass (public) communication, the more and more optimal joint presence of the somatic and psychical conditions bring the development of sexual reaction ability and fitness for accepting sexual experience to an earlier period (NÉMETH and GALAMBOS, 1984b). This is the world-wide phenomenon of the 20th century.

On the basis of the data by Terman (1938) in the USA 90% of the women and cc. half of the men got married without previous heterosexual relations at the beginning of the century. This proportion decreased to 40% for women and to 20% for men by the middle of the thirties. Similar observations were made in Europe. For example, according to the survey of SCHMIDT and SIGUSCH (1970) carried out in 1969 in the German Federal Republic, the ratio of university students having sexual relations averagely increased by 18—23% regarding males (18—20 years of age) and by 3—5% regarding females — compared to the only three years earlier (1966) data of GIESE and SCHMIDT. This latter fact also proves that the earlier starting of sexual life in the case of biologically developed the young people can be attributed to social effects. The same could be said for the young of puberty-age, since earlier sexual maturity only gives objective possibility for starting sexual life, however, the prevailing reality is determined by environmental (social) effects.

SEXUAL EXPERIENCES OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE

In the followings, a few data demonstrate the level of sexual experience of secondary school students from the county of Csongrád, at the beginning of the 80ies. The data could not be compared with previous ones since there are no survey data on this age group at disposal. Nevertheless, on the basis of estimations and personal experiences from schools, it could be stated that both the starting and activity of their sexual life surpass by far that of their mates of the previous generation.

On the basis of the study carried out by NÉMETH and GALAMBOS (1984a, 1984b) in 1982, the ratio of the young having intim heterosexual relations (easy-petting, heavy-petting, sexual intercourse) at the time of their 14th year was 57.1% for boys, and 62.8% for girls; being 87.9% and 94.0% in the case of the 18-year-old youths.

One third (35.5%) of the students already had heavy-petting (genital manipulation) experiences, within this group this meant substitute activity for sexual intercourse in 32.3% of the boys and 58.2% of the girls.

25% of the students had experiences of sexual intercourse (24.0% for boys, 25.8% for girls). As for function of age, the results obtained for the two sexes are as follows: in the case of boys the ratio of students already having sexual intercourse increased from 5.8% at the 14th year to 36.5% at the 18th year; in the case of girls this increase was from 4.8% to 51.0%. The median value of the time-point of the first sexual intercourse is 15.39 years for boys and 15.9 years for girls (Fig. 1.). It could be determined that the girls start their sexual life about half a year later, but then considerably leave their boy age-class behind.

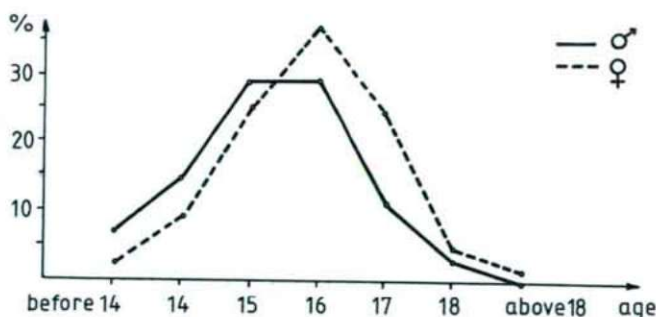


Fig. 1. Median of first sexual intercourse

MOTIVE PATTERN AND SUCCESS OF FIRST SEXUAL INTERCOURSE

Studying the motives of the students' first sexual intercourse it should be determined that factors of society motivated the majority of the boys, while emotional reasons prevailed in the case of the girls (Table 1.). This, too, verifies the statement of KON (1979) that boys are firstly motivated to start sexual life by curiosity, sexual necessity and self-justification, while girls set a higher value on emotional intimacy and regard sexual relations as the strengthening of the psychological connection with boys rather than as purpose in itself. It should be mentioned, however, that nowadays this tendency is decreasing more and more and greater majority of the girls — especially under adequate circumstances — are even capable of establishing sexual relations with boys merely through sympathy.

Table 1. Motives of first sexual intercourse

Motives	boys		girls		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
curiosity	190	22.8	85	9.5	275	15.5
society atmosphere	113	13.6	31	3.3	144	8.1
mildly drunken state	111	13.3	43	4.5	154	8.7
"I wanted to seem modern"	8	1.0	3	0.3	11	0.6
keeping of partner	19	2.2	48	5.1	67	3.8
true love	322	38.7	669	70.9	991	55.8
interests	16	2.0	3	0.3	19	1.1
compulsion	4	0.5	48	5.1	52	2.9
question not answered	49	5.9	14	1.5	63	3.5
total	832	100.0	944	100.0	1776	100.0

In both sexes the circumstances of the supervision of the first sexual intercourse are characteristic of being incidental (55.9% for boys and 54.8% for girls). Only 43.4% of the girls who already had sexual intercourse made plans (prepared) consciously for the first occasion in advance.

22.3% of the students were disappointed in the first sexual intercourse (13.8% of boys and 28.3% of girls). Studying the motives of the disappointed students it was determined that firstly the fulfilment (giving of pleasure) falling short of previous expectations played role as cause of disappointment on behalf of the partners (NÉMETH and GALAMBOS, 1984b).

It is characteristic of the quality of the first sexual intercourse that 66.6% of boys and 24.1% of girls declared to have had the feeling of orgasm. Despite the well-known orgasm difficulties of women at the first sexual intercourse it is an important task of the adult society (parent, teacher, physician) to prepare the young people for pleasant as possible first sexual act, since as BUDA (1980) wrote: "the mode and nature of the first sexual attempts may be so strongly determinative that later the personality will get excited the most easily and most passionately by such or similar excitations, or seeks this very form of excitation as sexual object". Therefore, the first experiences exert strong effect on the further development of the personality, both in positive and negative directions. According to our opinion, too, these may open way for both the reception and improvement of more and more joyful sexual experiences but at the same time, might also orientate towards surfeit, frigidity, and indirectly even homosexuality.

Table 2. Frequency of matings of students ($n=1755$)⁺ having sexual intercourses previously

a) boys

frequency \ age	14		15		16		17		18		total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
once	8	29.6	55	32.7	63	22.8	31	12.2	9	10.0	166	20.3
on few occasions	13	48.2	51	30.4	94	33.9	85	33.3	22	24.4	265	32.4
occasionally	3	11.1	43	25.6	72	26.0	76	29.8	28	31.1	222	27.2
relatively regularly**	2	7.4	6	3.6	33	11.9	48	18.8	26	28.9	115	14.1
question not answered	1	3.7	13	7.7	15	5.4	15	5.9	5	5.6	49	6.0
total	27	100.0	168	100.0	277	100.0	255	100.0	90	100.0	817	100.0

b) girls

once	12	42.9	38	24.4	49	16.1	40	12.5	12	9.4	151	16.1
on few occasion	14	50.0	78	50.0	139	45.5	132	41.5	49	38.2	412	43.9
occasionally	—	0.0	13	8.3	11	3.6	19	5.9	8	6.3	51	5.4
relatively regularly**	2	7.1	23	14.7	96	31.5	127	39.6	58	45.3	306	32.6
question not answered	—	0.0	4	2.6	10	3.3	3	0.9	1	.08	18	2.0
total	28	100.0	156	100.0	305	100.0	321	100.0	128	100.0	938	100.0
both sexes together	55		324		582		576		218		1755	

* In the group broken down according to years of age the elemental number of the active sample is less because a few students did not provide their birth date.

** E. g.: weekly, bi-weekly

FREQUENCY OF SEXUAL INTERCOURSE OF STUDENTS

Within the active sample ($n=1776$) it was also examined how frequently the students have sexual intercourse and how many partners they had so far. It can also be seen from Table 2 that — although the girls start their sexual life later — a rather high proportion (17—18th year) mate regularly.

Taking into consideration the frequency of the number of partners regarding those who had several sexual intercourses (Fig. 2), it could be determined that the sexual life of girls is rather characterized by regularity and small number of partners, that is, by emotionally more complete more balanced sexual behaviour.

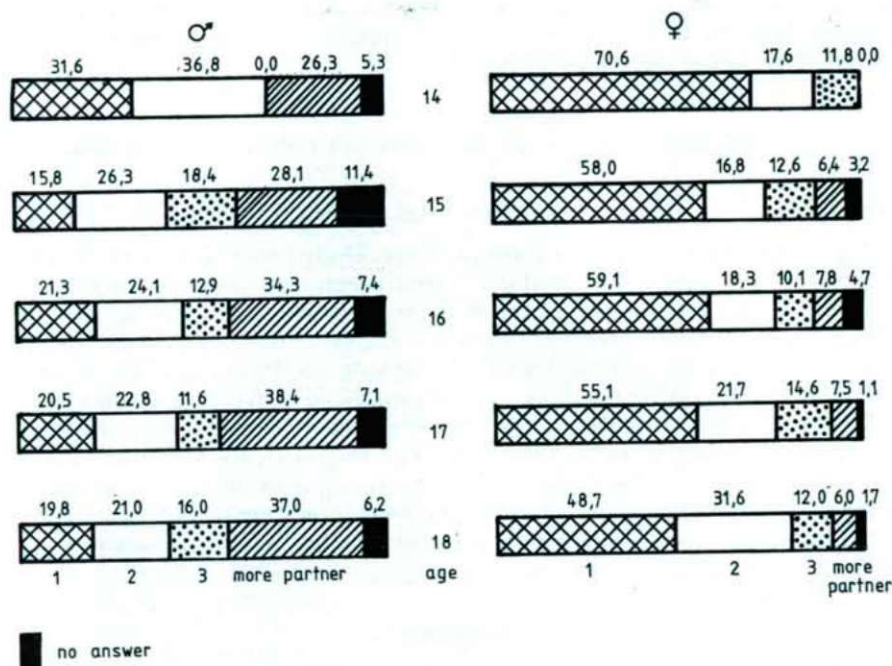


Fig. 2. Frequency of the number of the number of partners of students having several sexual intercourses (in %). (boys: $n=651$; girls: $n=787$)

CAUSE OF ACCELERATED SEXUAL LIFE OF THE YOUTHS

Our data unambiguously indicate the acceleration of the sexual life of the young people, the causes of which could be the followings according to our opinion, apart from the more rapid biological maturity:

1. Sexual education does not keep pace with the accelerated biological rhythm. The majority of parents do not take into consideration that the sexual demand of their children has reasonable base. Thus the young are compelled to develop sexual behaviour forms themselves, sometimes on the basis of "patterns" and "fashions" prevailing in peculiar transfers (PIAGET, 1970).

2. Though biological maturity shifted to an earlier period, social development takes place later and thus the lengthened time interval practically enhances the sexual inclination. This is promoted by the ambition of the young to become independent as well as by the conflict-state of their emotive detachment from parents.
3. As the result of the "scientific fight" against the socially established inhibitions the satisfying self-fulfilling and communicative character of the sex act gains more and more ground.
4. Sexual relations are ensured relatively soon in the life of the young people during the course of acquaintance. The short period does not give possibility for the appropriate levelled development of emotions, thus the individual satisfaction prevails in the sexual relations. By this means, the sex act appears as biological demand only and does not serve as the deepening of emotions.
5. The more enhanced eroticism of everyday life.
6. The better assurance of contraception increasingly reduces the inhibitions existing in this field.
7. The strong decrease of virginity, as status symbol.

The acceleration of the young people's sexual life raises serious biological and social problems. Despite the general use of contraceptives (their use during the course of mating was 45.1% in the case of the students occurring in our sample) the number of unwanted pregnancies, procured abortions and other health problems has increased. The psychological consequences implied in the long run by exaggerated are also not minor, many times impersonal sexual relations, devoid of required emotional bases.

It belongs to the complexity of the problem, however, that after all, the relations with the other sex are socially determined. The responsibility lies on the adults — writes LÖWE (1965) —, in the world of whom the young grow up and live, whose books they read, films they watch and whose sexual morals they see before themselves. The sexual education of the young people also necessitates the sexual education of the adults.

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